

Shakespeare and Violence  
Student Worksheet

Warmer – Discussing violence in entertainment

Discuss these questions in small groups.

1. Name some violent films.
2. Do you ever watch films or read books that contain violence?
3. Why do you think violent films are often popular?

I suppose people enjoy violence because they find it exciting!

Task 1 – Understanding quotations from Shakespeare

Here are lines from two of Shakespeare’s plays. Match the line (1–5) with its summary (a–e).

1. ‘The tiger has now seized the gentle hind ... welcome destruction, blood and massacre!

I see, as in a map, the end of all’ (from *Richard III*)

2. ‘Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.

Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.’ (from *Richard III*)

3. ‘Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter house.

Lest thou increase the number of the dead.’ (from *Richard III*)

4. ‘What hands are here! Ha, they pluck out mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand.’ (from *Macbeth*)

5. ‘Is this a dagger that I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.’ (from *Macbeth*)

- a. Queen Elizabeth can see what tragic events are to come.
- b. Macbeth sees a weapon with its handle pointing to his hand, and he thinks about murder.
- c. Macbeth shows his guilt, and feels that no amount of water will be able to clean his hands.
- d. The Duchess of York says that bad things are going to happen to her son, Richard III.
- e. Queen Elizabeth warns Stanley to leave England to escape King Richard III.



Glossary:

- |             |                          |                  |            |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| art = are   | bloody= covered in blood | thee, thou = you | thy = your |
| doth = does | hie thee = go, get away  | lest = in case   | mine = my  |
- massacre/slaughter = when a lot of people are killed at the same time in a violent way  
 pluck = remove something by pulling it between two fingers  
 dagger = a weapon with two sharp edges

**Task 2 – First listening: true or false?**

Listen to Alexander and Beth talking about violence in Shakespeare's plays. Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. Alexander is an actor.
2. Beth likes Shakespeare's plays.
3. Alexander explains the plot of *Macbeth*.
4. Alexander thinks that *Macbeth* is Shakespeare's most violent play.
5. *Titus Andronicus* is a very violent play.
6. Beth would like to see the play.

**Task 3 – Second listening: answering the questions**

Listen to the conversation again. Answer the questions.

1. Which character is Alexander going to play?
2. Why does Alexander's character want to murder King Duncan?
3. Match the type of violence with the play as mentioned in the conversation:

<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	assassination
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	death in combat
<i>Macbeth</i>	cannibalism
<i>Richard III</i>	suicide
4. Give an example of a violent incident from one of the plays mentioned.

**Task 4 – Vocabulary: informal expressions**

Look at these words and phrases from the conversation. What do you think they mean?

1. What have you been up to lately?
2. to get your teeth into (something)
3. It's not my thing.
4. in a nutshell
5. blood and gore
6. Let me be the judge of that.

Can you find any more informal expressions? What do they mean?

**Task 5 – Discussion**

Discuss these questions in small groups.

1. What do you think about the amount of violence in Shakespeare's plays?
2. Do you think violence on screen or violence in literature is dangerous? Explain.